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Directory of Illinois manufacturers. Edited by P. M. WALKER and compiled by D. MACLEAN. (Chicago: Illinois Manufacturers' Assoc. 1920. Pp. 1309. \$10.)

Fifty years of glass making, 1869-1919. (Pittsburgh, Pa.: Macbeth-Evans Glass Co. 1920. Pp. 93.)

Lumber, lath, shingles, etc. Census of Industry, 1918. (Ottawa, Canada: Dominion Bureau of Statistics. 1920. Pp. xi, 35. 10c.)

Report on productive industries of the commonwealth of Pennsylvania for 1916-1919. (Harrisburg: Dept. of Internal Affairs, Bureau of Statistics and Information. 1920. Pp. 878.)

Swift and Company yearbook: covering the activities for the year 1920. (Chicago: Swift & Co. 1921. Pp. 72.)

Transportation and Communication

The Electric Railway Problem. By DELOS F. WILCOX. (New York: The Author. 1921. Pp. xx, 789.)

This is an analytical report prepared by Dr. Delos F. Wilcox for the Federal Electric Railways Commission appointed May 31, 1919, to investigate street railway conditions which had reached a critical state and had assumed national significance because of the necessity of service in many cities during the war.

The commission held one hearing in New York City and a series of hearings in Washington. It thus accumulated a huge volume of evidence, personal opinion, discussion, statistical statements, and documents, which greatly overlapped, and required a comprehensive and systematic analysis to present the significance of the mass of material. Dr. Wilcox was engaged by the commission to prepare such an analysis which is contained in the present volume. Unfortunately the commission was inadequately financed and found itself unable to publish Dr. Wilcox's report, although arrangements were made for the publication of the commission's proceedings and various supplementary documents. Believing that his report should be made available to institutions and individuals interested in street railway problems, Dr. Wilcox has published the work at his own expense and has thus performed a great service. His analysis, in the acknowledgment of the commission, represents "a complete and masterful study of the whole electric railway problem."

The failure to publish Dr. Wilcox's report is particularly unfortunate since it tends to support a widely prevailing feeling that the investigation was furthered as part of a country-wide propaganda by street railway interests for an increase in fares, to bring national pressure upon local communities to remove franchise and contractual restrictions upon fares—not a serious inquiry to determine the facts and to

discover unbiassed solutions of the different problems. Dr. Wilcox's report completely disposed of such propaganda efforts and presented the materials from the standpoint of desirable public policy. The feeling, therefore, prevails among serious students of street railway policy that the failure to publish the report was perhaps not altogether dissociated from the conflict of views of Dr. Wilcox and the people who had engineered or attempted to engineer the active scope and purpose of the investigation.

It is impossible within the limits of this review to give an adequate summary of this comprehensive and voluminous report. Dr. Wilcox covers in 54 chapters, plus appendix and index, an analysis not only of the commission's proceedings and statements filed, but supplements such data with further facts and studies which were required for adequate presentation of the problems. The central point of the analysis relates to questions connected with impairment of credit including a discussion of the causes and the means of restoration. Among the causes are over-capitalization and its various attending financial mismanagements; failure of the companies to take advantage of possible economies of operation; hostility of the public due to unsocial attitude of the management; the increase in cost of operation; competition of automobiles and jitneys; restrictions upon fares particularly by franchise and contracts.

The chief methods of relief for the restoration of credit are discussed under proposals to remit taxes, paving obligations, and other municipal charges; limiting automobile competition and particularly placing jitney service under public regulation; financial reorganization of the companies; use of public credit; better methods of coöperation between companies and employees; the increase in fares, particularly the use of the zone system; and the feasibility of the so-called "cost of service" contracts.

In all the discussions, Dr. Wilcox quotes the opinions of the principal witnesses before the commission, presents the more important statistical and documentary data and offers such conclusions as seem to him reasonable on the basis of all available information.

Dr. Wilcox has little expectation that vital reorganization of the street railway management is possible without ultimate municipal or public ownership and operation. This is offered as the only final solution; everything else is futile or temporary, as fundamentally inconsistent with the underlying public interest in local transportation. He recognizes, however, the difficulties confronted by municipal ownership and operation and realizes that this solution is in most cases not immediately available, having to wait particularly for far-reaching changes in law and constitution and the possibility of financing the policy.

Perhaps a valid criticism of the analysis is the rather persistent presentation of facts from the standpoint of public ownership and operation. If the investigation was engineered in part as propaganda for street railway interests, Dr. Wilcox at least gives grounds for the countercharge that his analysis is a somewhat disguised brief for municipal ownership and operation. Any important general solution that may be offered is, of course, a matter of opinion and involves the question of soundness of judgment which cannot be conclusively measured. Personally, I believe Dr. Wilcox over-stresses the factors which he thinks inevitably lead to municipal ownership and operation and rather glosses over the difficulties. The fundamental trouble in the street railway situation undoubtedly has been the deep-seated conflict of public and private interests, but, I believe, in many instances or most cases this can be settled or the area of conflict greatly limited by organization other than the author's proposal.

Undoubtedly every city should be free to determine its own transportation policy and all arbitrary legal restrictions upon the introduction of public ownership and operation should be removed. With freedom for "self determination" many cities undoubtedly would adopt Dr. Wilcox's idea, but other equally desirable or for particular instances even superior ways may be available to reach the financial stability and organization consistent with the public interest. The limit of space, however, does not permit more concrete discussion of such other possibilities.

The obstacles to Dr. Wilcox's goal are admittedly great, consequently there must be open mind to the possibility of other methods. The local conditions are so various, particularly there are so many different psychological factors in the public attitude, also so many technical and financial entanglements, that the insistence upon a single form of organization to meet all cases has at least the appearance of doctrinaire opinion, and challenges disagreement. Dr. Wilcox may be right, but he speaks with considerably greater certainty than seems to be warranted by the great confusion of elements which affect the problem.

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NEW BOOKS

- GENGEBACH, E. *Common sense vs. prohibition in railroad rates, 1921.* American national economics, series no. 3. Third edition. (Washington: John Byrne & Co., 715 14th St., N. W. 1921. Pp. 40. 25c.)
- LETHEM, R. *The interpretation of tariffs.* (Chicago: The Traffic Service Corporation. 1921. Pp. 1, 152.)